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ABSTRACT

This document is intended to assist practitioners involved in the delivery of Part One General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), which are GNVQs designed for students in the United Kingdom who are at Key Stage 4 and the post-16 level. Section 1 examines the following topics of interest to centers that are contemplating introducing Part One GNVQs into their curriculum: the characteristics of the Part One GNVQs qualification; the distinctive learning style encouraged by Part One GNVQs; and things to consider when adding Part One GNVQs to the curriculum. Section 2, which is designed to assist teachers in devising their teaching and learning programs, provides in-depth information on the following items: deciding which unit to deliver first; establishing links between foundation and intermediate units; building in work-related learning opportunities; encouraging active learning styles; assessing students; preparing students for tests; using moderation; and considering progression opportunities available to students. Section 3 features case studies of five institutions that are delivering Part One GNVQs at Key Stage 4 and three institutions that are delivering Part One GNVQs at the post-16 level. Topics discussed in the case studies include the rationale for implementing the course, marketing, planning delivery, teaching and learning strategies, and progression. Fourteen figures/tables are included. (MN)

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TAKING PART ONE GNVQ FORWARD

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Note

The Learning and Skills Development Agency was formerly known as FEDA.

Vocational Learning Support Programme

Run by the Learning and Skills Development Agency:

- we aim to reach all post-16 schools and colleges and all levels of staff
- we offer support to teachers and managers to deliver high-quality GNVQs and vocational A-levels
- all our activities are backed by a programme of research and evaluation
- the Vocational Learning Support Programme is sponsored by the DfEE and all activities are subsidised.

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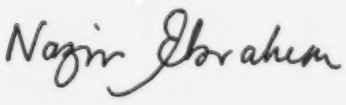
Preface

Education is not just a means to an end of finding a job: it should lead people to a lifetime of interest and exploration and inspire an enquiring mind. Such interests should be broad and fulfilling. We should be offering young people a wide range of options.

David Blunkett MP,
Secretary of State for Education and Employment
TES, 23 March 2001

The government is committed to providing vocational education in our schools and colleges. In July 2000, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment announced his intention to introduce vocational GCSEs from September 2002. His announcement built on earlier government proposals to rationalise the GNVQ framework and to emphasise the equivalence between GNVQs and their academic counterparts as a means of encouraging many more young people to combine vocational and general study. Further information on the nature of vocational GCSEs is due, but until then it is anticipated that the new qualification will be based largely on existing Part One GNVQs. It is also intended that vocational GCSEs will be three-unit qualifications, equivalent to two GCSEs.

This publication looks primarily at the delivery of the Part One GNVQ, but as the vocational GCSE is expected to be based on its structure, it may be relevant to the new qualification, too. In compiling it the Learning and Skills Development Agency's GNVQ Support Programme (now known as the Vocational Learning Support Programme) worked closely with schools and colleges that deliver Part One GNVQs and specialist consultants to highlight areas of best practice. Special thanks are due to Gillian Frankland who wrote and managed much of the publication.



Nazir Ebrahim
Manager, Vocational Learning Support Programme

Introduction

GNVQs were introduced to offer full-time students aged 16–19 a high-quality vocational alternative to academic courses, such as GCSEs and A-levels. The success of the qualifications, in terms of their ability to motivate students, led to the development of the Part One GNVQ – a GNVQ designed for students at Key Stage 4 and at post-16 level.

How to use this guide

This guide is split into three main sections:

Section 1 has been written for centres that are considering introducing Part One GNVQs into their curriculum.

Section 2 provides in-depth information about the distinctive elements of Part One GNVQs, such as assessment, moderation and progression.

Section 3 features case studies of centres that deliver the qualification at Key Stage 4 and post-16 level.

The future of Intermediate, Foundation and Part One GNVQs

In summer 2000, the government announced plans to relaunch Intermediate, Foundation and Part One GNVQs as vocational GCSEs. This means that current Part One GNVQs will only be available to students who complete their courses before or during summer 2003.

The vocational GCSE will be based largely on the Part One GNVQ: it will be a three-unit award, with two units assessed by portfolio and one unit assessed externally. The qualification will be available for teaching in September 2002.

At the end of each section of this guide there are notes that discuss how the new vocational GCSE is likely to relate to existing the Part One GNVQ.

Introducing Part One GNVQs

Part One GNVQs – the basics

Characteristics of the qualification

The Part One GNVQ was introduced in September 1995. Part of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the qualification is designed to provide a two-year course for Key Stage 4 students or a 1–2 year course for post-16 students.

Although the qualification requires less teaching time than Foundation and Intermediate GNVQs, it shares many of their characteristics. All three GNVQs:

- are unit-based qualifications
- require students to demonstrate their achievements in a variety of ways
- use internal assessment as well as external assessment
- encourage students to be actively engaged in planning and carrying out their work.

Part One GNVQs are available at two levels – foundation and intermediate – in seven subjects:

- art and design
- business
- engineering
- health and social care
- information and communications technology (ICT)
- leisure and tourism
- manufacturing.

It is planned that vocational GCSEs will be available in all of these subjects, plus science.

The distinctive learning style of GNVQ

Like all GNVQs, Part One GNVQs are designed to enable students to learn about one particular vocational area by:

- developing work-related skills
- acquiring relevant knowledge about the vocational area
- gaining an insight into what working in that vocational area means
- understanding how organisations in that vocational area operate
- researching and using information about that vocational area in their own work
- developing independence and experiencing different styles of learning
- taking greater responsibility for planning and carrying out their own work.

Vocational GCSE

The new vocational GCSEs will carry forward the GNVQ styles of teaching and learning. A consultation on the new qualification in autumn 2000 indicated widespread support in centres for the distinctive style to be retained. Students across the age and ability range have found it motivating.

Adding Part One GNVQ to the curriculum

Any centre wishing to introduce Part One GNVQs into the curriculum needs to have a clear rationale for doing so.

Below are some key questions which centres that have incorporated Part One GNVQ at Key Stage 4 and at post-16 level had to answer and their responses.

Which students are you aiming to attract?

Theoretically, it is for anyone who wants to take it. In reality, it has to 'go against' other courses in the timetable – which means we had to make hard choices about what to offer and where. For example, at Key Stage 4 it was effectively available to students who didn't want to do two creative/ technology subjects or two languages.

Centres want Part One courses to appeal to all abilities. However, we know that they place heavy demands on students in terms of course-work, and that weaker students who don't attend regularly are unlikely to find them attractive.

Those students who we know will be attracted to a vocationally oriented course and the GNVQ style of learning.

Which Part One GNVQs do you want to offer?

The ones we think students are interested in and that we have enough expertise to teach. For us, business is a certainty because it will attract students and we have teachers with that background. ICT for the same reasons – particularly as more students seem to want to do that.

In our college, Part One GNVQs were offered in subjects that seemed to support the programmes that our post-16 students were on – like our NVQs.

We have kept an eye on where our students go when they leave us at 16–18. Many of them go on to study childcare or take up part-time jobs in the care sector. So we think Part One GNVQ Health and Social Care would be attractive to some.

We have strong links with our local engineering company (the managing director is one of our governors) and quite a few students go there for work experience placements and tell us they enjoy it. So engineering is a possibility for us.

In our area, there seemed to be more and more job opportunities for young people in the leisure sector. Our students knew that and some of them liked the idea of getting a chance to find out more about it; some see it as giving themselves a head start when it comes to getting a job.

We are not sure about offering subjects where we already have a successful GCSE course running – why offer both? We would look at the subjects where we don't currently offer work-related learning opportunities.

Where will Part One GNVQ fit into the curriculum?

Given our block system at Key Stage 4 and the need for it to span two columns, that is difficult. It has to be accepted that many students (and parents) will want the traditional diet of GCSEs. We will therefore have to be careful.

If we do NVQ Manufacturing or Engineering, it will mean we can offer the post-16 students a full-time programme.

Our starting point was simple: we wanted the courses to be available to all our students. We saw that as the best way to guarantee success, by getting a mix of students involved.

Case studies showing how centres have integrated Part One GNVQs into the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and post-16 can be found on page 25.

Vocational GCSE

Centres will need to answer the same questions when considering whether to introduce vocational GCSEs.

Setting up a Part One GNVQ course

Part One GNVQs have been successful in centres where the distinctive features of the qualifications have been recognised and taken into account by the teachers and senior managers responsible for teaching and supporting the courses.

Having decided where to put the programme, centres also need to consider:

The timetable

It is vital that Part One GNVQ courses are allocated sufficient time for teachers and students to carry out the different learning activities required for the specifications. Most centres allocate the equivalent of two GCSE slots – ie five hours per week.

Staffing

Staff will need to have relevant expertise and experience of the vocational area and be willing to adopt the different styles of learning and assessment involved. Tutors need to be appointed early to the course so they have time to plan, prepare or go on a tutor placement if necessary.

External links

Establishing contacts with local organisations and employers in the vocational area is essential. One common approach has been for a centre to 'adopt' a local industry as the focus for the GNVQ.

Funding

The nature of the course means there may be costs incurred for photocopying, trips, visits and telephone calls. A budget needs to be allocated for these costs.

Staff training

Staff need time to plan and prepare the courses before they start teaching them. Attending moderation courses is part of this planning process.

Space

Staff and students benefit from having a 'baseroom' where resources can be stored and accessed outside contact time. Coursework needs to be stored in lockable cupboards.

Resources

The Part One GNVQ makes new demands on resources. As well as traditional written materials, staff need to have access to OHPs, a telephone, fax and a PC with a CD-ROM drive and internet access. Teachers should also spend time identifying organisations that might be able to provide documents that give students experience of the 'world of work'.

Vocational GCSE
If a centre is setting up a vocational GCSE course, it will need to address the same needs and issues as those outlined above.

Planning and organising Part One GNVQ programmes

Effective planning before the courses start is the key to successful implementation of Part One GNVQs.

The following planning schedule has been devised to help teachers prepare for the introduction of a Part One GNVQ course. It is based on the experience of a number of centres involved with Part One GNVQ since 1995. The schedule identifies key issues that need to be addressed, when and by whom. It provides a checklist that tutors and senior managers can use to make sure they are on track as they work towards the start of their new courses.

Figure 1. Sample planning table

Autumn (year prior to introduction)	Early spring	Ongoing from September
Audit current programmes Consult with staff, parents, governors and students	Select and appoint staff	Keep Part One GNVQ under review
Select Part One courses	Set up liaison with awarding body	Follow up staff meetings
Choose awarding body	Set up and carry out training	Remain in contact with the awarding body and liaise with the exams officer
Identify staff with an interest and/or experience of vocational education	Plan the Part One programme	Continue staff training and development opportunities
Select a group of students and identify marketing needs	Write schemes of work and assessment activities	Monitor attendance at moderation meetings
Research current industry/ community links and identify what more needs to be done	Make contact with employers, industry and the community	Produce a monthly magazine for parents and students
Identify resources/ accommodation needs. Draw up a budget for these.	Set up student recruitment process	Monitor student progress regularly.
	Plan/prepare induction activities	
	Identify and join support networks	
	Purchase resources	
	Identify a 'baseroom'	
	Market the course, including opportunities for progression.	

Vocational GCSE
The vocational GCSE will make similar demands in terms of planning and preparation.

Teaching and learning

This section is designed to help teachers devise their teaching and learning programmes.

When planning the teaching and learning programme for a GNVQ, the starting point should be the unit specifications. Teachers should familiarise themselves with the specifications for each of the three units and consider in detail what needs to be taught and learnt, and what evidence students must produce to succeed.

The unit specifications are written for students. Each unit specification has five sections:

About this unit

This section gives an overview of the unit, its links to other units and, where appropriate, links to other qualifications. It states clearly how the unit is assessed.

What you need to learn

This is written for the student and details the content of the unit by topic. It explains what the student needs to know and links directly to the requirements of the assessment evidence grid.

Assessment evidence grid

This sets out what the students need to achieve to gain the Pass/Merit/Distinction grades. It is carefully matched to the 'What you need to learn' section.

Essential information for teachers

This section gives teachers guidance on how to teach the unit, including ideas on how to interpret the unit specification, resources needed, possible teaching and learning activities, and approaches to assessment.

Key skills

This section gives teachers guidance on how and where there may be opportunities to address key skills requirements alongside the vocational content of the unit. Teachers should note that it is not a requirement for students to complete key skills in order to gain a Part One GNVQ. However, many schools and colleges have found it beneficial to develop key skills within Part One GNVQ programmes.

Which unit to deliver first?

Each Part One GNVQ course has three units. The entire content of each unit needs to be covered if students are to be successful in both their coursework and tests.

Patterns and styles of delivery vary between centres depending on the number of teachers, the timetable and the centre calendar for each year. When designing teaching and learning programmes for Part One GNVQs, teachers should ask themselves the following questions:

- Is there one unit that could help students' understanding of subsequent units?
- Is one unit more practical than another unit?
- Is one unit clearly related to work experience, and therefore best taken when a block of time is allocated to work experience?
- Is one unit based more on my personal expertise as a tutor?

Vocational GCSE
Vocational GCSEs will have three units that will be linked in a similar way to the Part One GNVQ units.

Links between foundation and intermediate units

The content of the foundation and intermediate unit specifications largely overlaps, so much of the basic knowledge students need to learn is the same, regardless of the level they are studying. It is therefore possible to teach foundation and intermediate students in one group. However, at intermediate level, students are expected to know and understand more information and apply a greater understanding than is required at foundation level.

The way that the foundation and intermediate unit specifications overlap is best illustrated using an example.

Figures 2 and 3. Examples of how the unit specifications for Foundation and Intermediate Part One GNVQs overlap

Figure 2. About this unit	
Foundation level	**Intermediate level**
Investigating health, social care and early years services	Investigating health, social care and early years services
In this unit you will learn about:	*You will learn about:*
the way in which services are organised	the structure and function of services
how people gain access to services	the main roles of people who work in health, social care and early years services
the main job roles of people who work in health, social care and early years settings	the skills that are needed by people working in the sector
the importance of the care value base when caring for clients	how principles of the care value base are applied by care workers
how to find information from different sources.	the importance of communication skills in care.

Figure 3. What you need to learn	
Foundation level	**Intermediate level**
The main types of service	The organisation of health, social care and early years services
You will need to find out about local organisations that deliver health and/or social care. You will need to identify where local organisations are and the main types of services they offer.	To help you understand how services are organised into sectors, you should identify examples of services in different sectors in your locality.
The organisations may be described as:	*Statutory sector organisations:*
health services	National Health Service
personal social services	local authority services
support groups and voluntary groups	*Voluntary and private organisations:*
early years education services.	Voluntary organisations, eg Help the Aged, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), Terrence Higgins Trust
	Private organisations, eg residential care homes, nursing homes, private hospitals and childminders.
You should also know that some organisations might be described in more than one way, depending on the services they offer.	You should also gain an appreciation of people outside the main sectors who also provide care. These informal carers include family, friends, neighbours and some local support groups.

In figures 2 and 3 it is easy to see that the requirements for both levels are very similar. For planning purposes, the unit specification identifies topics that could be studied over a number of weeks. During this period, foundation and intermediate students could be taught together. In subsequent weeks intermediate students could further develop their learning to reach the required level, while foundation students could be given structured worksheets and tasks to reinforce what they have learnt during the teaching inputs.

Many teachers design 'work logs' that enable both foundation and intermediate students to plan the time they spend working alone (see figure 4). When students have learnt how to use the work logs, some take on responsibility for writing their own. This way of working is what GNVQ aims for – students taking responsibility for their own learning.

Figure 4. An example of a work log

Tasks I have to do	Date task is set	Tick when task is completed
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Vocational GCSE

Details of the content of the units have yet to be published. However, the GNVQ approach to tackling topics with students across the ability range will be just as appropriate on vocational GCSE courses.

Building in work-related learning opportunities

GNVQs are intended to provide students with a genuine vocational experience. Teachers need to examine the units carefully and identify how and where work-related activities can be built into courses.

Work-related learning opportunities could be achieved by:

- finding work placements with employers (possibly half-days)
- using work experience blocks to visit local industries and companies relevant to the vocational area
- inviting speakers into centres
- 'adopting' a company to support a Part One GNVQ course
- involving governors or other contacts who work in industry
- inviting parents to talk about their jobs and work roles
- using the experiences and interests of other staff (teaching and non-teaching) to provide insights into the world of work in the sector.

Vocational GCSE

Vocational GCSEs will be designed to provide a work-related learning experience. Centres will still need to consider all the issues stated above.

Active learning styles

GNVQ students are required to work in different ways in the classroom to their peers studying 'traditional' courses. This means that teachers need to build in different approaches to teaching and learning when planning the delivery of their courses, for example, tutor-led sessions, individual working and group working.

Figure 5 illustrates some of the best practices taken from centres that have set up and successfully delivered Part One GNVQ courses.

Figure 5. Different approaches to teaching Part One GNVQ

Tutor-led sessions (tutors select aspects of the unit)	**Individual working** (students research aspects of the unit on their own)	**Group working** (students work in groups to research aspects of the unit)
The teacher could:	*Working individually, students could:*	*Working in groups, students could:*
give presentations to the whole class to introduce key aspects of the unit	collect information from employers	work on one aspect of the course and report back to the whole group
use video/resource materials with 'fact-finding' questions	read and take notes from set texts/publications, leaflets and newspapers	arrange group visits and interview people from industry
contact employers to organise visits to companies	write letters or telephone employers to arrange visits to the workplace	carry out role play/simulations
develop worksheets that allow students to practice the coursework element	write up worksheets	carry out practice tests.
invite speakers from industry to talk to the class	give presentations	
design in-house tests for students to complete.	visit the library/resource centre.	

Vocational GCSE

The vocational GCSE will continue to encourage the active learning styles that have been such a successful feature of Part One GNVQs. Students have enjoyed being given greater responsibility for planning and carrying out their work. Evidence from Ofsted and FEFC inspections also shows that students benefit enormously from the active teaching and learning styles promoted by GNVQ qualifications.

Assessment

Part One GNVQs are assessed internally (through coursework) and externally (using tests). The nature of the tests and coursework varies according to each vocational area.

Internal assessment – the process

Students are required to produce a piece of coursework for each of the three units they are studying.

Each unit is given a grade and a points score.

Teachers review and provide feedback to each student on their achievements. Students can rework their coursework to achieve the best points score possible.

Teachers assess their students' work.

Teachers internally moderate the work to check the assessment.

The awarding bodies check teachers' assessment via moderation.

The final points score is allocated.

External assessment – the process

Students are required to sit a test for each of the three units they are studying.

Each test is given a grade and a points score.

Depending on the result, students can accept the grade or re-sit the test one more time to improve their result.

The assessment timetable

Part One GNVQ centres have found that they need to plan assessment carefully to ensure that students have the best opportunity to demonstrate their achievements.

Figure 6. Key dates in the assessment timetable

January test	**A first opportunity to sit the test**
	Students can sit tests in January. Centres that decide not to use this test opportunity can obtain the question paper after the test date and use it for a 'mock' with students
May	**Portfolio moderation**
	Awarding bodies require that centres complete the majority of portfolio units by this date and submit the point scores. Centres running two-year courses can decide whether or not to submit scores in the first year. A list of all students with records of points, grades, Pass and Not Pass are sent to the awarding body. Once the awarding body has the scores, a moderator will request samples of work in order to carry out external moderation. The moderator will either be sent the samples or visit the school or college to look at the work
June test	**A second opportunity to sit the test**
	Students can sit tests for the first time or retake them if necessary. Centres that decide not to use this test opportunity can obtain the question paper after the test date and use it for a 'mock' with students
June	**Final submission of remaining portfolio unit point scores**
	Centres will need to send point scores for portfolio units not submitted by the earlier May deadline. The awarding body will complete the process of moderation. Once all the point scores for portfolio and tested units are available, these are aggregated to determine candidates' final grades
August	**Results**
	Part One GNVQ results will be released alongside the GCSE results.

The points grid

Each unit is given a grade and a set of points. Figure 7 indicates the number of points that constitute Not Pass, Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Students do not have to pass each test or piece of coursework. Good performance on one unit can compensate for poor performance on another unit. Students are able to build up points over the two years of the course and also have the opportunity to improve their marks for both the internally and externally assessed elements. They can rework coursework to improve the points they achieve and also re-sit the test.

Equivalence to GCSEs

The Part One GNVQ is treated as a double award, equivalent to two GCSEs. The point score equivalencies for Part One GNVQs are shown in the table below.

Figure 7. Point score equivalencies for Part One GNVQs

Intermediate	**Points**	**Equivalent GCSE grade**
Distinction	15	A*/A
Merit	12	B
Pass	10	C
Foundation		
Distinction	8	D
Merit	6	E
Pass	3	F/G

Vocational GCSE

Details of the assessment for vocational GCSEs have yet to be worked out. However, the qualifications will be graded as other GCSEs – from A* to G. The vocational GCSE will also be equivalent to two GCSEs.

Preparing students for tests

Teachers should check the specific details for unit(s) with the awarding body and explain to their students:

- the conditions under which the test will take place: the length of time allowed for the test, what materials and equipment can be taken into the room, and who, if anyone, the student can communicate with during the test
- the instructions to the candidate. Make sure that any uncertainty is cleared up so that students will not be confused on the day of the test. Perhaps show the students a completed sample front sheet and ask them to fill in their own details on a blank version
- the format of the test. For example, what kinds of questions will they be asked? How many questions does a typical test contain?
- the way the mark scheme works. Use the sample assessment materials supplied by your awarding body to show how marks are converted into grades
- the nature of the response expected from them. Are the students expected to produce single-word or very short answers, or are longer, more detailed answers expected?

Build students' confidence

- Introduce the notion of tests to students very early on in the programme.
- Use the practice materials provided by the awarding body to familiarise students with the test.
- Let students practice answering sample test questions in groups and individually. As the test date approaches, increase the number of questions set and hold tests in the same conditions as those specified by the awarding body.

Teach the knowledge

The unit specifications are important here. Teachers will need to teach all of the 'What you need to learn' section of each unit if students are to succeed in their tests. The assessment evidence grid tells students what the tests will focus on. Tutors therefore need to base their teaching programmes on both of these sections of the unit specifications.

Further information on preparing students for assessment can be found in two Vocational Learning Support Programme publications:

Get ready – preparing students for assignment writing

Get ready – preparing students for external assessment.

Vocational GCSE
Students taking vocational GCSEs will need to be taught the subject knowledge in the specifications and have the opportunity to practice taking the tests.

Moderation

It is important that students are made aware of how their work is assessed and that other people outside their school or college are involved. Knowing that there are external factors, deadlines and procedures will help tutors encourage students to complete work for assessment on time.

There are two stages to the moderation process for GNVQ portfolio work:

Internal moderation involves putting in place arrangements to ensure that the assessment decisions made by teachers are consistent for all pieces of coursework in each vocational area and at each level (foundation and intermediate). The purpose is to ensure that all students are treated fairly within the centre and that their work is assessed in the same way, regardless of which tutor assessed it and when that assessment was made.

External moderation involves either sending off samples of assessed coursework or having a moderator visit the centre to look at samples of work that have been assessed at the centre. The purpose is to ensure that the standards applied in all centres are the same and that all students for the qualification, across the country, have been treated fairly and in the same way. The awarding body will supply the name of the moderator and details of what needs to be sent to that person and by when. If visiting moderation is used, the centre will be told when the visit is to be made and what the moderator will be expecting to be able to see in terms of students' work.

Vocational GCSE
The moderation process for vocational GCSEs is likely to be similar to that outlined above. This is similar to the process already used to moderate existing GCSEs.

Progression

Part One GNVQ teachers need to consider the progression opportunities available to students on completion of their courses. Students who complete the award will have worked through three GNVQ units and may also have achieved certain key skills units. Part One GNVQ will have given them an experience of different learning styles and a good grounding in the vocational area. While Part One GNVQ has introduced them to one vocational area, for many students it will not be the area they are considering for their next course, training programme or job.

For Key Stage 4 students

For students at Key Stage 4 progression will depend not just on how well they achieve on their Part One GNVQs but also on how well they achieve on other qualifications they take, such as GCSEs or entry level awards. If they decide to carry on in full-time education, there are a number of options they could consider:

- taking other GNVQ units at the same level as their Part One to achieve a full award
- starting a full award GNVQ at the next level up or a vocational A-level
- AS-levels.

For post-16 students

For post-16 students progression will also depend on what other courses they have taken alongside their Part One GNVQ and how well they achieve across all the courses. The options open to post-16 students may also include:

- a Modern Apprenticeship programme
- an NVQ programme
- diploma courses
- AS-level/vocational A-level
- looking for a job opportunity in the vocational area of their Part One GNVQ
- looking for a specialist, occupational training course linked to their career aspirations.

Vocational GCSE

It is likely that the progression opportunities available to students (both Key Stage 4 and post-16) will be similar to those currently available to Part One GNVQ students.

Case studies

Section 3 contains case studies from schools and colleges that have implemented Part One GNVQs at either Key Stage 4 or post-16 level. Topics discussed include:

- the rationale for implementing the course
- marketing
- planning the delivery
- teaching and learning strategies
- progression.

Some of the institutions featured also produced sample assignments and schemes of work. These can be downloaded from the Vocational Learning Support Programme website (www.LSAgency.org.uk/vlsp).

Beaumont Leys School

Introduction to the school

Beaumont Leys School is located within the city of Leicester. It is a coeducational comprehensive with 1016 students aged 11–16 on roll. Of these, 524 are male and 492 are female. The ethnic contribution to the school population is 20 per cent and 21 per cent of the students are eligible for free school meals.

The school is involved in Leicester Compact, a partnership between local employers, schools and students. There is a Careers Education and Guidance programme, which is delivered through PSE and tutor time, and all upper-school students undertake two weeks' work experience which is complemented by visits from local firms and the careers services.

Why offer Part One GNVQ Manufacturing?

Initially, vocational courses were offered to support the school's links with industry. The Part One GNVQ Manufacturing was seen as a natural progression from this. Well-suited to the needs of our students living in the industrial city of Leicester, the course also complemented our Part One GNVQ qualifications in information technology, business, and health and social care.

Marketing the qualification

Foundation and intermediate courses are offered to all students regardless of gender or ability. Option selection is based on informed choice. A booklet is sent to parents and an open evening is held where senior management, form tutors and subject specialists can offer help and advice. All students receive a consultation with a senior member of staff before final decisions are made.

The success of Part One GNVQ Manufacturing to date

Examination results

Intermediate	**1997/98**	**1998/99**	**1999/2000**
Distinction	6	17	3
Merit	3	1	5
Pass	4	1	4
Foundation			
Distinction	0	2	0
Merit	0	6	2
Pass	5	7	3

What do the students think about the course?

A short questionnaire was compiled to find out what students think of the course.

Why did you choose Part One GNVQ Manufacturing as one of your options?

The majority of the students enjoyed making things and thought that the course would be interesting. They were also swayed by the fact that a GNVQ is equivalent to two GCSEs.

Having nearly completed Unit C, what do you think of the course so far?

Adjectives used included: excellent, good, hard, difficult and challenging. Students commented that they enjoyed working as a team and had learnt a lot.

Would you consider a job in manufacturing in the future?

A very positive response. All students are considering to different degrees a job in the manufacturing industry.

How does your GNVQ subject compare with your GCSEs?

The general consensus was that while the course was difficult and there was more work to complete, it was more interesting, rewarding and worth the equivalent of two GCSEs. One student commented that it was a 'better way of learning'.

Part One GNVQ Manufacturing – key issues

Attitudes towards the course

- Preconceptions of teachers and parents towards manufacturing are often misconceived and difficult to change.
- The manufacturing industry does not tend to receive a high profile nationally.
- Students' aspirations do not favour manufacturing as a vocation.
- Other GNVQs are more appealing: Business (money), Science (intellect), Health and Social Care (welfare), Leisure and Tourism (holidays), Manufacturing (???).
- Girls are very reluctant to choose manufacturing as a vocational course.
- Manufacturing tends to attract less academic and challenging students who are keen on practical work but reluctant to complete the written elements of the course.

Mechanics

- There is no feedback from examination results regarding marking criteria or students' performances within a grade.
- Material is not always forthcoming from examination bodies.
- Exam papers have had to be faxed to the centre during the examination period.
- No unit specifications were received from AQA (they had to be downloaded from the internet).

Delivery

- The new Part One is much easier to manage.
- It is less prescribed and offers greater flexibility and scope for delivery within centres.

Tips for new centres

- Secure industrial links.
- Contact centres already offering Part One GNVQ Manufacturing.
- Seek help and advice from your moderator and regional and local self-help groups.
- Include able and talented students in your marketing strategy.
- Do not trial the course at foundation level.

The future of Part One GNVQ Manufacturing at Beaumont Leys School

GNVQ staff were advised in December 2000 that the existing Part One GNVQs were to become vocational GCSEs. The school awaits further information on this development, but hopes that the qualification remains general and equivalent to two GCSEs.

One factor that should be considered is that unless people begin to understand the vocational opportunities in manufacturing locally and nationally, the future of the new Part One is challenged. As soon as a high-profile marketing strategy is relaxed, manufacturing fails to attract a cross-section of students – quite the opposite. The 1998 cohort was poor and in 1999 we only recruited students capable of foundation level. The 2000 cohort will hopefully reverse this trend and we should achieve some very successful results.

Impington Village College

Progression

When students join the Part One GNVQ course they are made fully aware of the GCSE equivalent in any final results they may achieve. The majority of our students go on to study academic FE courses and the students know that their GNVQ results will help them towards accessing their future options.

We make students aware that their GNVQ qualification, although not necessarily preparing them for work in leisure and tourism or health and social care at 16, will prepare them very well for any future course, which may lead directly to employment in these vocational areas. So far, two 16-year-old leisure and tourism students have taken up work-based training in travel agents. Many Part One GNVQ Engineering students also follow the work-based training route.

We do not offer GNVQ courses in our sixth form at present, so Part One results help students to gain entry to AS-level courses or the International Baccalaureate. Several students in the past have chosen to take Advanced GNVQs or are currently applying to study vocational A-levels in either travel and tourism or leisure and recreation at their local sixth form colleges, particularly if they have achieved a Merit in their Part One GNVQ. A handful of foundation students have chosen to take the full GNVQ Intermediate award at the local regional college. Health and social care students regularly take up advanced courses or one of the childcare options at the regional college.

Sawston Village College

Sawston Village College is a comprehensive school for 11–16 year olds in South Cambridge with 1085 students on roll. We have technology college status and our aim is to meet the needs of every student and to maximise their achievements, whatever their ability. The college does not have a sixth form, but students moving into further education have a choice of sixth form colleges in Cambridge to pursue their studies.

Consequently, as a centre introducing vocational courses, we had no experience of GNVQ whatsoever! Undaunted, we joined the Part One pilot project in 1997 offering ICT. With only one year's experience under our belts, but thoroughly convinced of the value of Part One, we introduced health and social care in 1998.

The rationale for introducing Part One GNVQ

Part One GNVQ gave us the opportunity we had been waiting for to extend our curriculum at Key Stage 4 and to meet the needs of those students for whom a traditional programme of GCSEs was inappropriate.

Part One GNVQ has enabled the college to:

- challenge and motivate both the very able and the disaffected, underachieving students
- create independent learners with confidence and maturity
- meet the needs of more students, regardless of their ability.

Part One GNVQ has enabled Sawston Village College to:

- manage their own learning and achievement
- experience the world of work and see the relevance of their studies
- acquire a balanced package of qualifications with a clear progression route.

We currently have 50 students in year 10 and 55 students in year 11 involved in vocational courses, and the Part One GNVQ has been successful in terms of results and students' experience. It has been a steep learning curve for all staff involved, especially as we are a relatively small team who all deliver in other curriculum areas as well as Part One GNVQ. However, the benefits of these courses far outweigh the limitations.

Management issues

Involving and gaining the support of senior management

It was vital that the Part One GNVQ course received the status and recognition it required to become established within the curriculum. Senior management recognised this and supported the vocational team wherever possible.

Establishing a viable curriculum model

Deciding where the new course would sit in the curriculum model was a major issue. Would other subject areas be affected by the 20% time requirement? Would it restrict student choice? Would other subjects feel threatened by its introduction? Who will teach it – will they be specialists or recruits from other curriculum areas?

Staffing the courses and defining roles and responsibilities

As a centre new to GNVQ we appointed a GNVQ coordinator who had credibility and was committed to the GNVQ culture and philosophy. We then had to maximise our expertise as it was not always possible to have total specialists delivering the course.

Addressing new and different teaching and learning styles

It was essential that the team involved in delivering Part One GNVQ recognised the different approach to learning and the potential it offered to students. The aim was to encourage independent learning by giving the students more autonomy in the planning and delivery of assignments and to create opportunities for the vocational dimension to be included wherever possible.

Assessment and monitoring student progress

The new teaching and learning strategies demand that a very clear and manageable assessment structure is in place. At Sawston, we found the following have helped:

- regular discussions with students in lessons on a one-to-one basis and targets set if necessary
- manageable but firm deadlines
- parameters for revisiting assignments
- keeping the documentation as simple as possible – awarding bodies have designed templates in most cases that can be adapted and given an 'in-house style'
- ensuring that time for moderation is clearly identified in the school calendar and recognised by SMT as essential to the assessment process.

The students

Students who opt for Part One GNVQ courses at Sawston are largely positive about the course, enjoy the different experience and particularly the freedom and flexibility it offers them in their work. They appreciate being given the chance to show greater responsibility and initiative. The transformation in some students is amazing. Able students can become sophisticated-independent learners who produce outstanding results. Students who do not perform well in other areas of the curriculum adopt a different attitude to their GNVQ work, and if given the opportunity will work to achieve a higher grade than in other subjects.

Obviously not all students cope as well, particularly some foundation students who have to work within a more structured framework. It is important that the course is tailored to meet the needs of the ability range and this can be quite demanding on the teacher.

Progression

Establishing sound progression routes is vital to the success of Part One. At Sawston, we do not have a sixth form but students feed into surrounding sixth form colleges. Communication between the school and the colleges has been taking place and students feel part of the transition process.

Key issues

- SMT support
- resources
- curriculum planning
- identifying suitable qualified, experienced and enthusiastic staff to teach the course.

Tips for new centres

- Start with a manageable number of students, especially if you have no GNVQ experience at all.
- Insist that all staff involved in GNVQ are trained in delivering and assessing the qualification.
- Aim for a mixed-ability group if possible. Do not target only foundation students. This reduces the status and credibility of the course.
- Fight for a vocational base – you will need somewhere to store a variety of resources and to keep students' portfolios safe.
- Ensure that students have some access to IT if the centre is not delivering Part One ICT.
- Seek out all available support – network with other schools as much as possible, investigate local and national support mechanisms such as your LEA and the Vocational Learning Support Programme.
- Tap into all your local contacts. Use parents, governors and friends. Send out an initial questionnaire to local companies explaining the course and asking them to respond to any areas in which they may be able to help.
- Spend time on your induction. Make it exciting, but ensure that students know exactly what they are letting themselves in for.

Thurston Community College

Thurston Community College is a 13–18 mixed, rural comprehensive school with approximately 350 sixth form students and 300 students in each of the other years.

At Thurston we had a successful history of vocational provision within the post-16 curriculum and took the first available opportunity to offer GNVQ in the academic year 1993/94. Since that time a major commitment has been made to offer a full range of GNVQ courses alongside A- and AS-levels. Part One GNVQ supported our wide-ranging pre-16 curriculum and offered a seamless progression route to all students aged 14–19.

Part One GNVQ gave the school an opportunity to:

- introduce a vocational track throughout the 14–19 curriculum
- offer an alternative teaching and learning style
- move away from the GCSE-dominated curriculum
- increase choice.

Marketing

The marketing of the Part One programme was our first real priority. Parents and students had to be convinced that these courses were:

- of equal worth to the GCSE
- for students of all abilities
- going to be recognised as a real qualification by employers and gatekeepers of post-16 programmes in the future.

We took as our target group all year 9 students across the ability range. Part One programmes were given the same emphasis as GCSE – we were careful not to single out a type of student for whom this programme may be more suitable. The idea of an alternative style of teaching and learning was stressed rather than early specialisation on a vocational pathway. The following quotes are taken from the year 9 pathways booklet.

GNVQ courses are demanding

GNVQ is not a course designed for the least-able student. It will be very fulfilling and enjoyable, but will also be demanding

Planning the delivery

Like all other courses, a Part One programme must be effectively managed. We ensured that team members were able to:

- meet regularly, both formally and informally, to plan, discuss and develop the programme
- work with a united perspective
- work with partners beyond school, eg in business and commerce, and vocational fields
- develop high-quality assessment and monitoring strategies.

Other whole-school management issues that were considered before the start of the programme were:

- the continuity of the 14–19 curriculum
- student entitlement and access to the courses
- progression opportunities
- links with other programmes and courses, and the year 9 option system
- group size.

The table below summarises the differences between Part One GNVQ and GCSE that the delivery team considered to be significant and hence shaped the teaching and learning style adopted – the most important of these being the emphasis on student-led involvement in learning. This was highlighted by a quote from one student who when asked about the difference in teaching style between Part One GNVQ and GCSE replied 'in GNVQ we do things, in GCSE we read books'.

Part One GNVQ	**GCSE**
Emphasis on skills	Emphasis on knowledge acquisition
Student-led involvement in learning	Teacher/syllabus-led
Internal assessment encourages more cooperative skills between students and assessors	Syllabus dictates requirements of students
Unit approach and assessment at the end of each unit	Summative examination with coursework

Students are encouraged from the beginning of the programme to be more responsible and to have ownership of their learning. This does mean that they are encouraged to use resource centres, libraries and the telephone early on in the course. Some degree of walking about the building is to be expected with students 'out of class'. This may come as a culture shock to others within the school environment. It is therefore important that all staff are aware of new course development in the institution.

Recruitment into year 10

Subject area	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Business	20	30	36	38	80
Art and design		18	20	22	20
Leisure and tourism				18	16
Manufacturing	12	10	12		

All courses, with exception of manufacturing, have recruited a wide range of ability. Manufacturing did not and subsequently was removed from the curriculum. A number of reasons have been suggested for this, including the name and the delivery solely within the technology curriculum. The number of students undertaking a Part One programme has grown from a modest 10 per cent of the year group at the beginning to approximately 35 per cent of students.

Results

Student results have secured the future of Part One GNVQ at Thurston – even after the initial pilot funding ceased. Ninety per cent of students have gained the full award and the A*–C points score has been increased overall by the inclusion of Part One GNVQ. Seeing their accreditation build up throughout the course has no doubt encouraged students. Students have demonstrated an increased motivation and their research skills have improved. In addition, they have become a more confident cohort, with a greater responsibility for their own work. The awareness of career needs has also increased, although not necessarily within the vocational area in which they were working. The overall effect of Part One is that more students are taking advanced vocational courses.

Wrenn School

Introduction to Wrenn School

Wrenn School is a mixed 11–18 comprehensive school situated on two sites in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. It currently has 1329 students on roll from wide socio-economic backgrounds.

Why introduce Part One GNVQ?

GNVQs were offered for the first time in 1995, when students could choose to study a one-year, full-time course in health and social care, leisure and tourism or business.

These post-16 GNVQs proved very successful. Given that we had experience in running health and social care and leisure and tourism, and appropriately trained staff, we felt it was a natural progression to offer these two areas at Key Stage 4. We decided not to offer business because our GCSE course has always been, and continues to be, very successful.

Part One GNVQ courses are aimed at students of all abilities.

Take up figures	Foundation	Intermediate
1999/2001		
Leisure and Tourism	2	5
Health and Social Care	1*	15
2000/02		
Health and Social Care	4	12

*This student later transferred to intermediate level

Marketing

The Part One courses are marketed in a number of ways. Year 9 students all receive an options booklet, which contains detailed information on the qualification generally, and the specific subject areas. Parents and students are then invited to attend an options information evening, where the head of year, deputy head (curriculum) and head of careers discuss options and progression.

The GNVQ coordinator goes into year 9 assemblies to highlight these 'new' GNVQ courses and often form groups are visited, too. We have also used various marketing materials produced by the exam boards.

Success so far

Our Part One students are on line for great success.

1999/ 2001 cohort	No of students	Intermediate Distinction	Intermediate Merit	Intermediate Pass	Foundation Distinction	Foundation Merit	Foundation Pass
Leisure and Tourism	7	1	1	1*	1	1	
Health and Social Care	16**	4	3	7			

*Two other students may only gain unit accreditation due to special circumstances
**Two students out of the original 16 have now left school

The Part One model

When we first introduced Part One GNVQ we ran leisure and tourism and health and social care (1999/01). Although both these subject areas were offered in 2000/02, we only had take up for health and social care. Both subject areas are again being offered for 2001/03.

The Part One GNVQ is allocated 6 x 50-minute lessons per week. Every GCSE subject in school gets 3 x 50-minute lessons, and as a Part One Award is equivalent to two GCSEs the time allocation is doubled.

Staffing

Two members of staff deliver the health and social care course. The same staff teach year 10 and year 11.

The teaching is split according to units:

Health and social care

Unit A	Staff member X	2 x 50-minute lessons
Unit B	Staff member Y	4 x 50-minute lessons
Unit C	Staff member Y	4 x 50-minute lessons

Staff member X has two years' experience of Part One, although she had previously taught post-16 GNVQ for a short period of time.

Staff member Y has two years' experience of Part One, plus experience of post-16 GNVQ since its inception. She is also the deputy GNVQ coordinator.

Delivery of the course

The two members of staff deliver the course over five terms. We decided to teach the units as follows:

	Year 10	Year 11
Unit A		Taught September to May
Unit B	This unit is taught over the 5 terms	
Unit C	Taught September to July	

Industry links

A wide variety of visitors have been used for the health and social care course. They work with the students, give talks, presentations and show videos.

These links are invaluable. The students are exposed to real-life situations and are learning from the experts who are in the workplace. Links with industry improve motivation and put classroom-taught theory into context.

Examples of links: nurses, care assistants, residential care homes, voluntary organisations, informal carers, Health Education Authority, area health authority.

The students

The 2000/02 cohort – Part One GNVQ Health and Social Care

There are 16 students in the group: 15 female and one male. (We are concerned about the gender balance this year – last year we had 12 females and four males.)

The group is of mixed ability.

What the students think about Part One

They love it! They like the:

- styles of teaching
- variety of activities and approaches
- fact that it is active
- teamwork
- different working relationships
- fact that it is interesting
- fact that they can get involved
- support.

Key issues

- Marketing is **vital**:
  - to students
  - to parents
  - to staff.
- Staff need time to plan and discuss units.
- Visitors and visits aid motivation immensely but these need writing into your schemes of work early.
- Find room to store resources and coursework.
- ICT access again aids motivation and helps break up some of the drier lessons.

Tips for new centres

- Build up a bank of visitors/speakers/visits.
- Get visitors and visits booked and planned early.
- Ensure that staff teaching the course sit, talk and plan together.
- Try and build up links with other colleagues/schools teaching the units.
- Get recommendation from colleagues/schools on the usefulness of resources – you can make some expensive mistakes.
- Write your scheme of work so it nests the foundation and intermediate levels (a good resource is the QCA booklet).
- An SMT link who has knowledge of vocational courses is a godsend.

The future of Part One at Wrenn School

Next year we plan to offer health and social care, and leisure and tourism.

When vocational GCSEs are introduced the A–G grading should help give the qualification an equal standing with academic GCSEs. It should perhaps give us some ammunition against those colleagues who think vocational qualifications are the easy option. Our worry is that the coursework element will be reduced further with more emphasis on examinations.

Stroud College

Stroud College has approximately 8000 students, of whom 600 are full time. The college is made up of five schools: business, arts, health care and leisure studies, integrated studies, and technology and engineering. Across college we offer courses from foundation level to first-year degree level in a range of subjects.

The rationale for offering Part One GNVQ

To quote our Head of Integrated Studies, 'We are running the course to give students who are ready the opportunity to experience a range of vocational areas in the college, to enable them to make a more informed choice about their future. Basically, this is to broaden their experience of college as much as possible and provide them with a progression route.'

At the beginning of 2000/01, I [an engineering lecturer] was asked to run Part One GNVQ Engineering Foundation for a group of eight Integrated Studies (IS) students – students with special needs.

The Part One model

Part One GNVQ Engineering Foundation students are studying the following subjects this year:

- Unit A – Design and graphical communication
- Unit B – Application of new technology in engineering
- Unit C – Make engineered products.

Timetable

The fact that each IS student had a timetable tailored to his/her individual needs made it very difficult to find a teaching slot. However, the course was allocated four hours per week, spread evenly over the academic year. The normal college lunch hour is between 12.15 and 1.15pm, but very early on in the course the students raised their concerns about working a three-hour afternoon. They felt that this was far too long, so by negotiation we fixed the classes equally each side of a rescheduled lunch hour.

Progress

One student withdrew from the course very early on in the year, deciding that engineering was not for him. The remaining seven students have made excellent progress with the practical aspects of Unit C 'Make engineered products'. Provided they can follow a step-by-step plan they generally produce some good work. I am quite sure that two or three students have the aptitude to follow the Modern Apprenticeship path in the long term.

Key skills

We have a cross-college team of key skills specialists. Ideally, they should look at all vocational and technology assignments and try to find the maths, communication and IT within them. Where there are gaps, they then work out additional exercises to fill them.

Because I have been very late in finalising my assignment for the Part One, the key skills lecturers have written their own assignments. The summer term will be the earliest that we will be able to sit down and compare assignments.

The students

All the students on the course have special needs. One of my keenest students has real problems with number and even with lots of help from the key skills tutor, this remains problem. I have a student who is dyslexic. I have two students who have had, and still do have to a lesser extent, problems with attendance. Three students want to spend their lives playing computer games but are just catching on to how hard it would be to make a living at it. I have one student who lacks a bit of confidence, but will probably end up working in the engineering sector.

What do the students think of the course?

Even at this stage, no one wants to drop out. The students seemed to enjoy the Christmas period when they were making things to a set but fairly relaxed regime. Trying to get them to produce written work and drawings on an individual basis has been difficult, to put it mildly.

The future of Part One at Stroud College

I can't be sure, but the chances of getting my group through the external exams are very slim. With today's emphasis on attainment, I have to have my doubts about it, but we will have to see.

Thurston Community College

At Thurston, students unable to cope with the demands of vocational A-levels or AS-levels tended to opt for various courses leading to the GNVQ full award. However, with improved GCSE results the numbers of students enrolling for intermediate GNVQs decreased, making it difficult for the college to justify running these programmes. This was why we decided to introduce Part One GNVQs into the post-16 curriculum under the general title of 'preparation for advanced study'.

Three Part One subjects were included in each student's programme with the understanding that they should follow at least two of the courses. The courses were business, health and social care and information technology. The majority of students also followed GCSE Mathematics and GCSE English.

Part One GNVQ courses at post-16 did not suffer the same timetabling restraints as those at Key Stage 4. Greater blocks of time were available for teaching the course at post-16 and most students were occupied for approximately 22 periods in a 30-period week. A compulsory period of work experience was included in the course.

The management team responsible for other vocational courses undertook responsibility for planning and running the Part One programme, which was timetabled outside the main sixth form blocking arrangements to allow greater flexibility.

Student response has been encouraging. They have welcomed the opportunity to study a broader curriculum as many students in this cohort have yet to decide their career intentions. It is envisaged that after this programme some students may progress to vocational A-level courses or other courses at this level. Some students will seek employment on completion.

Successful introduction of Part One GNVQ is dependent on:

- high-quality staff development, which focuses on management, planning, delivery and assessment
- a whole-centre approach towards the programme, involving SMT, pastoral advisers, career advisers, tutors, vocational staff and outside agencies
- the programme recruiting an 'all-ability' cohort of students
- governors, parents and local industry supporting the courses.

The future

Part One has been a success at Thurston because of the significant differences in content, delivery, assessment and teaching and learning styles compared with GCSE.

It is important that the new vocational GCSE retains those significant differences and continues to provide students with a real alternative to academic courses. There is no doubt that many students have obtained significantly improved examination results by following the Part One. Vocational GCSEs will be offered in the future, provided that centres are convinced that the time spent in planning, assessment and collecting appropriate resources will bring forth the same degree of student motivation that the Part One has obviously achieved.

Wolverhampton College

Wolverhampton College is a large multi-site FE college with approximately 14,000 part-time and 1800 full-time students. Provision for 16–19 year olds includes a broad range of general and vocational A-levels, GCSEs and intermediate and foundation qualifications in technology, science, motor vehicle, construction, catering, hairdressing, beauty, media, performing arts, ICT, health studies, business, and leisure and tourism.

Why offer Part One GNVQs?

Each year a large number of foundation and intermediate students come to the college. Many do not wish to specialise at this stage and, therefore, they select a broader education, which often leads to GCSE retakes. As in many colleges, the achievement and retention of such groups were not satisfactory. To address this issue, a cross-college working party was set up with a view to developing and replacing the full-time GCSE re-sit course with a more appropriate vocational programme.

Model

Foundation and Intermediate GNVQs will be available from September 2001. Most options will combine the teaching of both levels. The Part One GNVQ Intermediate is equal to two GCSEs (A*–C) and the foundation level (D–G). Eight hours per week will be allocated to the delivery of Part Ones.

- GCSE Maths and English will be available in all grid slots and Science in two grid slots.
- There will be more integration of key skills into the main curriculum area and the wider key skills will be delivered via the tutorial programme.

There will also be a range of NVQ options: business administration, foreign languages, music technology and sport for life.

GNVQ students will need strong tutorial support, with particular attention given to action planning and individual progress reviews. Various tutorial support models are being discussed prior to implementation in September 2001. They include:

- 1.5-hour tutorial slots weekly
- caseloading with shorter weekly sessions
- introduction of 'super tutors', who will spend a considerable part of their time tutoring
- use of specialised support staff to deliver the tutorial programme
- for enrichment: a coordinating group will oversee the events and produce an integrated college-wide calendar of activities. There will be close liaison with the student union and external bodies, eg Millennium Volunteers.

Staff development

A working party drawn from the respective GNVQ areas reconvened after Easter to coordinate the programme in preparation for the September 2001 launch. Staff training days have been arranged for college staff to receive current information and work on schemes, assignments, resources and assessments.

Key skills

Part One GNVQs provide a natural vehicle for the development of the wider key skills, but we feel that our target group needs further support from key skills specialists with application of number, communication and ICT. We timetable students for an hour a week for each key skill for two terms so that key skills specialists can assess students, provide support in key skills workshops, assess portfolio evidence and prepare groups for their external tests. In our experience, the success of these timetabled key skills sessions depends on students' perception of their relevance to the rest of their programme. Staff development events are arranged so that vocational teams can work with key skills staff to produce assignment activities which will generate evidence of students' key skills achievement.

Marketing

The proposals are currently being publicised in local secondary schools and initial expressions of interest have been encouraging. A marketing campaign will be launched in the summer term to promote the initiative. This will include:

- 16–19 college brochures
- radio interviews
- taster sessions to be arranged in the summer term
- mailshots to appropriate external organisations.

The message is clear – students need to be aware of a mix-and-match vocational and academic curriculum customised to their specific needs.

The students

The programme is aimed primarily at the large number of students who come to the college in September having failed to achieve GCSE grades at A*–C. Many of these students are unsure about their future career path and are somewhat reluctant to commit themselves to the full GNVQ Intermediate award – they currently retake their GCSEs. Part One GNVQs, however, will allow them to pick up a vocational qualification at the same time as GCSE Maths and GCSE English.

The programme is also suitable for students who, for a variety of reasons, have missed substantial periods of schooling in year 10 and year 11 or have not achieved qualifications at 16.

Progression

Many level 2 students do not attain the entry-level requirements to progress to level 3. The Part One GNVQ initiative should allow students to achieve the equivalent of four GCSEs and thereby progress. On completion of the programme the students may move on to a vocational A-level in the respective GNVQ area. The overall aim and strategy is to improve retention and achievement rates and give students a sense of accomplishment and belonging. The strong tutorial framework will focus on pre-entry guidance, comprehensive on-programme support and progression routes. The students will see the college as a vehicle of transportation from foundation level to a more advanced programme, and not merely a 'one-stop' bus ride.

Conclusion

Many colleges have decided to wait for the arrival of the vocational GCSEs and are continuing with their existing curriculum of either retake GCSEs or GNVQ full awards. Wolverhampton College has decided to initiate the Part One programme from September 2001 to address the issues of:

- curriculum innovation
- retention
- achievement
- progression
- growth
- potential 14–16 collaboration with local schools.

It seems that the new vocational GCSEs will be based on the Part One GNVQs. By implementing this strategy from September 2001, the college feels that it will acquire a solid base of experience from which to launch the vocational GCSEs.

The Part One GNVQ has given Key Stage 4 and post-16 students a high-quality vocational alternative to academic courses since its pilot in 1995.

Taking Part One GNVQ forward looks at the delivery of the qualification including assessment, moderation and progression, but also looks forward to the implementation of vocational GCSEs in September 2002.

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